

EXHIBIT 20
DATE 4.3.07
SB 78

Virginia City
Montana

March 18, 2004

Commissioners:

My name is Ken Stockton. I am the Chairman of the Disabled American Veterans Committee of the Laurel Montana Chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It has come to our attention that you have refused to enforce the Stream Access Law in the county where you were elected to, among other duties, enforce the laws of the State of Montana.

I have before me the June 2000 opinion of the Attorney General of Montana regarding access where public bridges cross streams. As you must know, it states very clearly....

"Use of a County Road right of way to gain access to streams and rivers is consistent with and reasonably incidental to the public's right to travel on county roads." And later states "Therefore, the public may gain access to streams and rivers by using the bridge, it's right-of-way and it's abutments."

My question to you is. Where is the access for the disabled veterans at the bridges in your county? We often are unable to move very far up and down the stream, but we would like to fish on the right-of-way at the bridge or be picked up by a friend in a boat at these bridges. We often are only able to do short floats because of our condition, but we believe we are entitled to enjoy Montana's waterways as much as the law allows.

The Public Land and Water Access Association has provided our committee with pictures of public bridges in your county where there are obstacles that would prevent almost anyone from exercising their access rights. These include high fences, electric fences and even signs that claim the right-of-way is private property.

We didn't fight our county's wars only to have our rights taken away by greedy individuals and timid bureaucrats. Do your job as Americans. Insure that reasonable access is available for everyone as the law directs.

Sincerely

Ken Stockton
Ken Stockton
Committee Chairman



VFW
POST 3177

Kenneth (Ken) L. Stockton, Chairman
*Committee on Access to Public Lands
for the Handicapped & Disabled*

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